

**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS A VICTIM
OF HOUSING DISCRIMINATION, THE FAIR
HOUSING PROJECT MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.
855-FHP-PSLS (815) 347-7757**

What is the Fair Housing Project?

The Fair Housing Project at Prairie State Legal Services investigates possible housing discrimination, assists clients to resolve fair housing disputes with housing providers and conducts community legal education on fair housing rights and responsibilities.

How can the Project help me?

1. We may **negotiate** on your behalf with a landlord or other housing provider (real estate agent, management company, seller of a home, bank or lending institution).
2. We may **investigate** what you think could be housing discrimination through the use of fair housing testing.
3. We may help you **file a complaint** with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or Illinois Department of Human Rights.
4. We may **represent** you if you file a complaint.

What is fair housing testing?

We investigate by a process called "testing". A fair housing "test" is a planned interaction between a housing provider and an individual pretending to seek housing (known as a "tester"). Testing provides information that creates a snapshot of actual practices of a housing provider. In many cases, testing is the best way to uncover how a housing provider may be discriminating against people in protected classes.

Who does the Project serve?

Our Project serves people living in Winnebago, Boone, Lake, McHenry, Peoria and Tazewell Counties. There are no income limits for potential clients.

**Call us at 855-FHP-PSLS
(855) 347-7757**

**We will connect you to the Prairie State office
that serves the county where you live.**

About Prairie State Legal Services

Prairie State Legal Services is a not-for-profit law firm that provides civil legal services at no fee to the poor, elderly, and people with disabilities. Prairie State has 11 offices serving 36 counties throughout northern and central Illinois. Prairie State focuses services on legal problems that impact the ability of our clients to meet their basic human needs, including physical safety, access to health care, adequate housing, and similar needs. For detailed information about Prairie State Legal Services, see our website at www.pslegal.org.

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PRAIRIE STATE LEGAL SERVICES
Equal Access to Justice

Your Right to Fair Housing

**Equal Access to
Housing of Your Choice**



Prairie State Legal Services—Equal Access to Justice

Fair Housing: What does it mean?

“Fair Housing” is the right to live in an integrated community, free from discrimination. Congress passed the federal Fair Housing Act, along with the Civil Rights Act of 1968, one week after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Under the current federal Fair Housing Act, it is illegal for a housing provider to discriminate against anyone due to their race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and familial status. Familial status refers to households with children, households seeking custody of children, or women who are pregnant.

Illinois fair housing laws provide additional protection against discrimination on the basis of ancestry, age, military or military discharge status, marital status, protective order status, and sexual orientation.

Local ordinances in your city or county may provide additional protections.

Who must provide fair housing?

- Building owners/landlords
- Management companies
- Real estate agents
- Home sellers
- Mortgage brokers and companies
- Banks or other lending institutions
- Government agencies

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What does illegal housing discrimination look like?

Housing discrimination can take many forms. Some common forms include:

- Misrepresentation of housing availability
- Refusal to rent or sell or negotiate for housing
- Refusal to make reasonable accommodations or allow reasonable modifications for persons with disabilities
- Refusal to make or provide information about mortgage loans
- Discriminatory terms and conditions
- Discriminatory advertising
- Threats, intimidation, coercion or retaliation
- Sexual harassment
- Providing different housing services
- Refusal to grant zoning variances based on future occupants of a proposed development

What are some examples?

Housing discrimination is not always obvious. Many people don't know when discrimination is happening to them. A person might need more information to confirm that they were a victim of discrimination. The following statements or actions by a housing provider may be discriminatory:

- *We rent only to English speakers.*
- *No, we cannot allow you to build a ramp for your wheelchair.*
- *I prefer to rent to women.*
- *We don't allow support animals, unless it is a certified seeing-eye dog.*
- *We don't offer mortgage loans in that part of town.*
- *The apartment has already been rented (and further investigation reveals that it had not in fact been rented).*
- *I can't rent the upstairs apartment to you because your children will be too noisy for other tenants.*
- *I can't rent to you because you have an order of protection and I don't want any trouble here.*
- *The security deposit is actually 2 months of rent (and further investigation reveals that others are charged less).*
- *We offer those competitive interest rates only to married couples.*
- *Here is your eviction notice (after you complain of sexual harassment by a housing provider's employee).*

